

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLVII. MISS BONCASSEN'S IDEA OF HEAVEN.

It was generally known that Dolly Longstaff had been heavily smitten by the charms of Miss Boncassen; but the world hardly gave him credit for the earnestness of his affection. Dolly had never been known to be in earnest in anything—but now he was in very truth in love. He had agreed to be Popplecourt's companion at Custins because he had heard that Miss Boncassen would be there. He had thought over the matter with more consideration than he had ever before given to any subject. He had gone so far as to see his own man of business, with a view of ascertaining what settlements he could make and what income he might be able to spend. He had told himself over and over again that he was not the "sort of fellow" that ought to marry; but it was all of no avail. He confessed to himself that he was completely "bowled over,"—"knocked off his pins!"

"Is a fellow to have no chance?" he said to Miss Boncassen at Custins.

"If I understand what a fellow means, I am afraid not."

"No man alive was ever more in earnest than I am."

"Well, Mr. Longstaff, I do not suppose that you have been trying to take me in all this time."

"I hope you do not think ill of me."

"I may think well of a great many gentlemen without wishing to marry them."

"But does love go for nothing?" said Dolly, putting his hand upon his heart.

"Perhaps there are so many that love you."

"Not above half-a-dozen or so."

"You can make a joke of it, when I—— But I don't think, Miss Boncassen, you at all realise what I feel. As to settlements and all that, your father could do what he likes with me."

"My father has nothing to do with it, and I don't know what settlements mean. We never think anything of settlements in our country. If two young people love each other they go and get married."

"Let us do the same here."

"But the two young people don't love each other. Look here, Mr. Longstaff; it's my opinion that a young woman ought not to be pestered."

"Pestered!"

"You force me to speak in that way. I've given you an answer ever so many times. I will not be made to do it over and over again."

"It's that d—— fellow, Silverbridge," he exclaimed almost angrily. On hearing this Miss Boncassen left the room without speaking another word, and Dolly Longstaff found himself alone. He saw what he had done as soon as she was gone. After that he could hardly venture to persevere again—here at Custins. He weighed it over in his mind for a long time, almost coming to a resolution in favour of hard drink. He had never felt anything like this before. He was so uncomfortable that he couldn't eat his luncheon, though in accordance with his usual habit he had breakfasted off soda-and-brandy and a morsel of devilled toast. He did not know himself in his changed character. "I wonder whether she understands that I have four thousand pounds a year of my own, and

shall have twelve thousand pounds more when my governor goes! She was so headstrong that it was impossible to explain anything to her."

"I'm off to London," he said to Popplecourt that afternoon.

"Nonsense! you said you'd stay for ten days."

"All the same, I'm going at once. I've sent to Bridport for a trap, and I shall sleep to-night at Dorchester."

"What's the meaning of it all?"

"I've had some words with somebody. Don't mind asking any more."

"Not with the duke?"

"The duke! No; I haven't spoken to him."

"Or Lord Cantrip?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask questions."

"If you've quarrelled with anybody you ought to consult a friend."

"It's nothing of that kind."

"Then it's a lady. It's the American girl!"

"Don't I tell you I don't want to talk about it? I'm going. I've told Lady Cantrip that my mother wasn't well and wants to see me. You'll stop your time out, I suppose?"

"I don't know."

"You've got it all square, no doubt. I wish I'd a handle to my name. I never cared for it before."

"I'm sorry you're so down in the mouth. Why don't you try again? The thing is to stick to 'em like wax. If ten times of asking won't do, go in twenty times."

Dolly shook his head despondently. "What can you do when a girl walks out of the room and slams the door in your face? She'll get it hot and heavy before she has done. I know what she's after. She might as well cry for the moon." And so Dolly got into the trap and went to Bridport, and slept that night at the hotel at Dorchester.

Lord Popplecourt, though he could give such excellent advice to his friend, had been able as yet to do very little in his own case. He had been a week at Custins, and had said not a word to denote his passion. Day after day he had prepared himself for the encounter, but the lady had never given him the opportunity. When he sat next to her at dinner she would be very silent. If he stayed at home on a morning she was not visible. During the short evenings he could never get her attention. And he made no progress with the duke. The duke had been courteous

to him at Richmond, but here he was monosyllabic and almost sullen.

Once or twice Lord Popplecourt had a little conversation with Lady Cantrip. "Dear girl!" said her ladyship. "She is so little given to seeking admiration."

"I dare say."

"Girls are so different, Lord Popplecourt. With some of them it seems that a gentleman need have no trouble in explaining what it is that he wishes."

"I don't think Lady Mary is like that at all."

"Not in the least. Anyone who addresses her must be prepared to explain himself fully. Nor ought he to hope to get much encouragement at first. I do not think that Lady Mary will bestow her heart till she is sure she can give it with safety." There was an amount of falsehood in this which was proof at any rate of very strong friendship on the part of Lady Cantrip.

After a few days Lady Mary became more intimate with the American and his daughter than with any others of the party. Perhaps she liked to talk about the Scandinavian poets, of whom Mr. Boncassen was so fond. Perhaps she felt sure that her transatlantic friend would not make love to her. Perhaps it was that she yielded to the various allurements of Miss Boncassen. Miss Boncassen saw the Duke of Omnium for the first time at Custins, and there had the first opportunity of asking herself how such a man as that would receive from his son and heir such an announcement as Lord Silverbridge would have to make him, should she at the end of three months accept his offer. She was quite aware that Lord Silverbridge need not repeat the offer unless he were so pleased. But she thought that he would come again. He had so spoken that she was sure of his love; and had so spoken as to obtain hers. Yes; she was sure that she loved him. She had never seen anything like him before—so glorious in his beauty, so gentle in his manhood; so powerful, and yet so little imperious; so great in condition, and yet so little confident in his own greatness; so bolstered up with external advantages, and so little apt to trust to anything but his own heart and his own voice. In asking for her love he had put forward no claim but his own love. She was glad he was what he was. She counted at their full value all his natural advantages. To be an English duchess! Oh, yes; her ambition understood it all! But she loved him, because

in the expression of his love no hint had fallen from him of the greatness of the benefits which he could confer upon her. Yes, she would like to be a duchess; but not to be a duchess would she become the wife of a man who should begin his courtship by assuming a superiority.

Now the chances of society had brought her into the company of his nearest friends. She was in the house with his father and with his sister. Now and again the duke spoke a few words to her, and always did so with a peculiar courtesy. But she was sure that the duke had heard nothing of his son's courtship. And she was equally sure that the matter had not reached Lady Mary's ears. She perceived that the duke and her father would often converse together. Mr. Boncassen would discuss republicanism generally, and the duke would explain that theory of monarchy as it prevails in England, which but very few Americans have ever been made to understand. All this Miss Boncassen watched with pleasure. She was still of opinion that it would not become her to force her way into a family which would endeavour to repudiate her. She would not become this young man's wife if all connected with the young man were resolved to reject the contact. But if she could conquer them—then—then she thought that she could put her little hand into that young man's grasp with a happy heart.

It was in this frame of mind that she laid herself out not unsuccessfully to win the esteem of Lady Mary Palliser. "I do not know whether you approve it," Lady Cantrip said to the duke; "but Mary has become very intimate with our new American friend." At this time Lady Cantrip had become very nervous, so as almost to wish that Lady Mary's difficulties might be unravelled elsewhere than at Custins.

"They seem to be sensible people," said the duke. "I don't know when I have met a man with higher ideas on politics than Mr. Boncassen."

"His daughter is popular with everybody."

"A nice, ladylike girl," said the duke, "and appears to have been well educated."

It was now near the end of October, and the weather was peculiarly fine. Perhaps in our climate October would of all months be the most delightful, if something of its charms were not detracted from by the feeling that with it will

depart the last relics of the delights of summer. The leaves are still there with their gorgeous colouring, but they are going. The last rose still lingers on the bush, but it is the last. The woodland walks are still pleasant to the feet, but caution is heard on every side as to the coming winter.

The park at Custins, which was spacious, had many woodland walks attached to it, from which, through vistas of the timber, distant glimpses of the sea were caught. Within half a mile of the house the woods were reached, and within a mile the open sea was in sight, and yet the wanderers might walk for miles without going over the same ground. Here, without other companions, Lady Mary and Miss Boncassen found themselves one afternoon, and here the latter told her story to her lover's sister.

"I so long to tell you something," she said.

"Is it a secret?" asked Lady Mary.

"Well, yes, it is—if you will keep it so. I would rather you should keep it a secret. But I will tell you." Then she stood still, looking into the other's face. "I wonder how you will take it?"

"What can it be?"

"Your brother has asked me to be his wife."

"Silverbridge!"

"Yes—Lord Silverbridge. You are astonished."

Lady Mary was very much astonished—so much astonished that words escaped from her, which she regretted afterwards. "I thought there was someone else."

"Who else?"

"Lady Mabel Grex. But I know nothing."

"I think not," said Miss Boncassen slowly. "I have seen them together, and I think not. There might be somebody, though I think not her. But why do I say that? Why do I malign him, and make so little of myself? There is no one else, Lady Mary. Is he not true?"

"I think he is true."

"I am sure he is true. And he has asked me to be his wife."

"What did you say?"

"Well, what do you think? What is it probable that such a girl as I would say when such a man as your brother asks her to be his wife? Is he not such a man as a girl would love?"

"Oh, yes."

"Is he not handsome as a god?" Mary

stared at her with all her eyes. "And sweeter than any god those pagan races knew? And is he not good-tempered and loving, and has he not that perfection of manly dash without which I do not think I could give my heart to any man?"

"Then you have accepted him?"

"And his rank and his wealth! The highest position in all the world in my eyes."

"I do not think you should take him for that."

"Does it not all help? Can you put yourself in my place? Why should I refuse him? No, not for that. I would not take him for that. But if I love him because he is all that my imagination tells me that a man ought to be; if to be his wife seems to me to be the greatest bliss that could happen to a woman; if I feel that I could die to serve him, that I could live to worship him, that his touch would be sweet to me, his voice music, his strength the only support in the world on which I would care to lean—what then?"

"Is it so?"

"Yes, it is so. It is after that fashion that I love him. He is my hero, and not the less so because there is none higher than he among the nobles of the greatest land under the sun. Would you have me for a sister?"

Lady Mary could not answer all at once. She had to think of her father, and then she thought of her own lover. Why should not Silverbridge be as well entitled to his choice as she considered herself to be? And yet how would it be with her father? Silverbridge would in process of time be the head of the family. Would it be proper that he should marry an American?

"You would not like me for a sister?"

"I was thinking of my father. For myself I like you."

"Shall I tell you what I said to him?"

"If you will."

"I told him that he must ask his friends—that I would not be his wife to be rejected by them all. Nor will I. Though it be heaven, I will not creep there through a hole. If I cannot go in with my head upright, I will not go even there."

Then she turned round, as though she were prepared in her emotion to walk back to the house alone. But Lady Mary ran after her, and having caught her, put her arm round her waist and kissed her.

"I at any rate will love you," said Lady Mary.

"I will do as I have said," continued Miss Boncassen. "I will do as I have said. Though I love your brother down to the ground he shall not marry me without his father's consent." Then they returned arm-in-arm close together; but very little more was said between them.

When Lady Mary entered the house she was told that Lady Cantrip wished to see her in her own room.

CHAPTER XLVIII. THE PARTY AT CUSTINS IS BROKEN UP.

THE message was given to Lady Mary after so solemn a fashion that she was sure some important communication was to be made to her. Her mind at that moment had been filled with her new friend's story. She felt that she required some time to meditate before she could determine what she herself would wish; but when she was going to her own room, in order that she might think it over, she was summoned to Lady Cantrip. "My dear," said the countess, "I wish you to do something to oblige me."

"Of course I will."

"Lord Popplecourt wants to speak to you."

"Who?"

"Lord Popplecourt."

"What can Lord Popplecourt have to say to me?"

"Can you not guess? Lord Popplecourt is a young nobleman, standing very high in the world, possessed of ample means, just in that position in which it behoves such a man to look about for a wife." Lady Mary pressed her lips together, and clenched her two hands. "Can you not imagine what such a gentleman may have to say?" Then there was a pause, but she made no immediate answer. "I am to tell you, my dear, that your father would approve of it."

"Approve of what?"

"He approves of Lord Popplecourt as a suitor for your hand."

"How can he?"

"Why not, Mary? Of course he has made it his business to ascertain all particulars as to Lord Popplecourt's character and property."

"Papa knows that I love somebody else."

"My dear Mary, that is all vanity."

"I don't think that papa can want to see me married to a man when he knows that with all my heart and soul—"

"Oh, Mary!"

"When he knows," continued Mary,

who would not be put down, "that I love another man with all my heart. What will Lord Popplecourt say if I tell him that? If he says anything to me I shall tell him. Lord Popplecourt! He cares for nothing but his coal-mines. Of course if you bid me see him I will; but it can do no good. I despise him, and if he troubles me I shall hate him. As for marrying him, I would sooner die this minute."

After this Lady Cantrip did not insist on the interview. She expressed her regret that things should be as they were, explained in sweetly innocent phrases that in a certain rank of life young ladies could not always marry the gentlemen to whom their fancies might attach them, but must, not unfrequently, postpone their youthful inclinations to the will of their elders—or, in less delicate language, that though they might love in one direction, they must marry in another; and then expressed a hope that her dear Mary would think over these things, and try to please her father. "Why does he not try to please me?" said Mary. Then Lady Cantrip was obliged to see Lord Popplecourt, a necessity which was a great nuisance to her. "Yes; she understands what you mean. But she is not prepared for it yet. You must wait awhile."

"I don't see why I am to wait."

"She is very young, and so are you, indeed. There is plenty of time."

"There is somebody else, I suppose."

"I told you," said Lady Cantrip in her softest voice, "that there has been a dream across her path."

"It's that Tregear!"

"I am not prepared to mention names," said Lady Cantrip, astonished that he should know so much. "But indeed you must wait."

"I don't see it, Lady Cantrip."

"What can I say more? If you think that such a girl as Lady Mary Palliser, the daughter of the Duke of Omnium, possessed of fortune, beauty, and every good gift, is to come like a bird to your call, you will find yourself mistaken. All that her friends can do for you will be done. The rest must remain with yourself." During that evening Lord Popplecourt endeavoured to make himself pleasant to one of the FitzHoward young ladies, and on the next morning he took his leave of Custins.

"I will never interfere again in reference to anybody else's child as long as I live," Lady Cantrip said to her husband that night.

Lady Mary was very much tempted to open her heart to Miss Boncassen. It would be delightful to her to have a friend; but were she to engage Miss Boncassen's sympathies on her behalf, she must of course sympathise with Miss Boncassen in return. And what if, after all, Silverbridge were not devoted to the American beauty! What if it should turn out that he was going to marry Lady Mabel Grex! "I wish you would call me Isabel," her friend said to her. "It is so odd, since I have left New York I have never heard my name from any lips except father's and mother's."

"Has not Silverbridge ever called you by your Christian name?"

"I think not. I am sure he never has." But he had, though it had passed by her at the moment without attention. "It all came from him so suddenly. And yet I expected it. But it was too sudden for christian-names and pretty talk. I do not even know what his name is."

"Plantagenet; but we always call him Silverbridge."

"Plantagenet is very much prettier. I shall always call him Plantagenet. But I recall that. You will not remember that against me?"

"I will remember nothing that you do not wish."

"I mean that if—if all the grandeurs of all the Pallisers could consent to put up with poor me, if heaven were opened to me with a straight gate, so that I could walk out of our republic into your aristocracy with my head erect, with the stars and stripes waving proudly round me till I had been accepted into the shelter of the Omnium griffins, then I would call him——"

"There's one Palliser would welcome you."

"Would you, dear? Then I will love you so dearly. May I call you Mary?"

"Of course you may."

"Mary is the prettiest name under the sun. But Plantagenet is so grand! Which of the kings did you branch off from?"

"I know nothing about it. From none of them, I should think. There is some story told about a Sir Guy, who was a king's friend. I never trouble myself about it. I hate aristocracy."

"Do you, dear?"

"Yes," said Mary, full of her own grievances. "It is an abominable bondage, and I do not see that it does any good at all."

"I think it is so glorious," said the American. "There is no such mischievous

nonsense in all the world as equality. That is what father says. What men ought to want is liberty."

"It is terrible to be tied up in a small circle," said the duke's daughter.

"What do you mean, Lady Mary?"

"I thought you were to call me Mary. What I mean is this. Suppose that Silverbridge loves you better than all the world."

"I hope he does. I think he does."

"And suppose he cannot marry you, because of his—aristocracy?"

"But he can."

"I thought you were saying yourself—"

"Saying what? That he could not marry me! No, indeed! But that under certain circumstances I would not marry him. You don't suppose that I think he would be disgraced? If so I would go away at once, and he should never again see my face or hear my voice. I think myself good enough for the best man God ever made. But if others think differently, and those others are so closely concerned with him, and would be so closely concerned with me, as to trouble our joint lives—then will I neither subject him to such sorrow nor will I encounter it myself."

"It all comes from what you call aristocracy."

"No, dear; but from the prejudices of an aristocracy. To tell the truth, Mary, the more difficult a place is to get into, the more the right of going in is valued. If everybody could be a duchess and a Palliser, I should not perhaps think so much about it."

"I thought it was because you loved him."

"So I do. I love him entirely. I have said not a word of that to him; but I do, if I know at all what love is. But if you love a star, the pride you have in your star will enhance your love. Though you know that you must die of your love, still you must love your star."

And yet Mary could not tell her tale in return. She could not show the reverse picture; that she being a star was anxious to dispose of herself after the fashion of poor human rushlights. It was not that she was ashamed of her love, but that she could not bring herself to yield altogether in reference to the great descent which Silverbridge would have to make.

On the day after this—the last day of the duke's sojourn at Custins, the last also of the Boncassens' visit—it came to pass that the duke and Mr. Boncassen, with

Lady Mary and Isabel, were all walking in the woods together. And it so happened when they were at a little distance from the house, each of the girls was walking with the other girl's father. Isabel had calculated what she would say to the duke, should a time for speaking come to her. She could not tell him of his son's love. She could not ask his permission. She could not explain to him all her feelings, or tell him what she thought of her proper way of getting into heaven. That must come afterwards if it should ever come at all. But there was something that she could tell. "We are so different from you," she said, speaking of her own country.

"And yet so like," said the duke, smiling; "your language, your laws, your habits!"

"But still there is such a difference! I do not think there is a man in the whole Union more respected than father."

"I dare say not."

"Many people think that if he would only allow himself to be put in nomination, he might be the next president."

"The choice, I am sure, would do your country honour."

"And yet his father was a poor labourer who earned his bread among the shipping at New York. That kind of thing would be impossible here."

"My dear young lady, there you wrong us."

"Do I?"

"Certainly! A prime minister with us might as easily come from the same class."

"Here you think so much of rank. You are—a duke."

"But a prime minister can make a duke, and if a man can raise himself by his own intellect to that position, no one will think of his father or his grandfather. The sons of merchants have with us been prime ministers more than once, and no Englishmen ever were more honoured among their countrymen. Our peerage is being continually recruited from the ranks of the people, and hence it gets its strength."

"Is it so?"

"There is no greater mistake than to suppose that inferiority of birth is a barrier to success in this country."

She listened to this and to much more on the same subject with attentive ears, not shaken in her ideas as to the English aristocracy in general, but thinking that she was perhaps learning something of his own individual opinions. If he were more liberal than others, on that liberality

might perhaps be based her own happiness and fortune.

He, in all this, was quite unconscious of the working of her mind. Nor in discussing such matters generally did he ever mingle his own private feelings, his own pride of race and name, his own ideas of what was due to his ancient rank with the political creed by which his conduct in public life was governed. The peer who sat next to him in the House of Lords, whose grandmother had been a washer-woman and whose father an innkeeper, was to him every whit as good a peer as himself. And he would as soon sit in council with Mr. Monk, whose father had risen from a mechanic to be a merchant, as with any nobleman who could count ancestors against himself. But there was an inner feeling in his bosom as to his own family, his own name, his own children, and his own personal self, which was kept altogether apart from his grand political theories. It was a subject on which he never spoke; but the feeling had come to him as a part of his birthright. And he conceived that it would pass through him to his children after the same fashion. It was this which made the idea of a marriage between his daughter and Tregear intolerable to him, and which would operate as strongly in regard to any marriage which his son might contemplate. Lord Grex was not a man with whom he would wish to form any intimacy. He was, we may say, a wretched, unprincipled old man, bad all round; and such the duke knew him to be. But the blue blood and the rank were there; and, as the girl was good herself, he would have been quite contented that his son should marry the daughter of Lord Grex. That one and the same man should have been in one part of himself so unlike the other part—that he should have one set of opinions so contrary to another set—poor Isabel Boncassen did not understand.

ABOUT SWEDEN.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

MANY people now pretend to care but little for a tour, unless they can contrive to carry home some trophies to attest their rare artistic penetration, and their powers of discovery of priceless ugly things. Smith goes to Holland mainly to pick up old blue pots, wherewith he packs his battered old portmanteau to the brim, and shudders at the bumps and thumps it gets in course

of travelling. Brown starts upon a voyage for the discovery of delft, and gives himself great trouble to collect a few old "bits," such as with great ease he could buy any day at Christie's. Jones returns from Italy, his hatbox crammed with pinchbeck cameos and spurious mosaics, and his knapsack stuffed with rustic necklaces and ear-rings, which bear the stamp of Brummagem in the rudeness of their make; while the more aspiring Robinson is off to Greece and the Levant, with the barely-whispered project of out-digging Dr. Schlieman, for, by prodding with his walking-stick in a spot on the sea-shore which the spirits have revealed to him, he entertains great hopes of finding Helen's wedding-ring, which she dropped into the sea when she eloped to Troy.

I would warn intrepid hunters of old crockery and ginneracks that, if they go to Sweden, they will find poor sport. Sweden is by no means a good country for bric-à-brac. The peasants mostly are too poor to have any hoarded riches in the way of rare old china, or ancient coins, or costly gems. There are no battered old brass fenders, to be bought for half-a-crown, which would now in Belgravia be deemed a perfect bargain at five guineas apiece. There are no distorting mirrors or rickety rush-bottomed chairs, or ramshackle old coal-scuttles to be had for an old song; trifles such as when transplanted to a drawing-room in Kensington would set æsthetic minds raving and craving for the like. Indeed I doubt whether an ancient tinder-box be there easily discoverable, and I can conceive a curio-hunter returning from the chase without even an old pair of Scandinavian snuffers to reward him for his toil.

The only things I found worth buying in my rural explorations were some specimens of handloom weaving, which I saw in Dalecarlia. Of these a gay striped apron now serves as a small table-cover, and occasions many explosions of feminine surprise by the fineness of its texture, and the thickness of its make. Some linen made for headgear shows a similar solidity, and betrays a thorough innocence of sundry tricks of sizing which are practised in the trade. There was a clay floor to the cottage where this cloth was being woven, and little furniture except a table and some chairs. The beds appeared to be bare boards, which indeed were well-nigh hidden by the curtains drawn in front of the recesses that contained them, much in

the same fashion as the berths on board a ship. A large covey of small children were running about barefoot, while a woman, likewise barefoot, sat working at her loom. Through a friendly interpreter she speedily concluded a bargain for the sale of the linen she had made. The cloth was soon cut from the loom, and measured off and paid for, and then, perhaps in celebration of the fact that this was the beginning of her commerce with Great Britain, the weaver very warmly shook me by the hand, and cried out, "Takka mikkit," or, "Many Thanks."

A fair or market for the sale of home-made woollen stuffs and linen was going on most busily when I arrived in Gothenburg, the peasants selling from their little carts, which served instead of counters for the showing of their wares. Although some hundreds were assembled, there were few, if any, costumes worth much notice to be met with, and the gathering was more practical, perhaps, than picturesque. I learned too that the linen was inferior to that made further north, and certainly the vendors showed but small disinclination to part with their home produce, possibly because they knew so well its real worth. A similar reason might account for the evident reluctance wherewith the Dalecarlians would sell what they had woven. Mostly they appeared to make for their own use, and to value very highly whatever they had made. Even the poor folk seemed to keep a plentiful store by them, and in the cupboards of the somewhat better class of dwellings I was shown such piles of sweetly-scented, neatly-folded linen—such snow-white caps and kerchiefs, such splendid sheets and pillow-cases, with crochetwork "insertions" to add to their attractiveness—that I, or, to speak more truly, at least the better half of me, regretted that no eloquence in English, French, or German could anyhow be found to be inducive of a sale.

The people in this district still cling to their old costumes, which are quaintly picturesque; but they seldom go abroad in all their splendour until Sunday. Then both men and women come forth as clean and neat as it is possible for soap and water and clothes-brushes to make them. Short red waistcoats with green sleeves, knee-breeches, and long leathern aprons covering the chest, these constitute the usual male workaday apparel; while the women wear thick ankle-boots and short dark woollen skirts, which on Sundays

are enlivened by bright bodices and aprons of red and blue, or black and yellow, with large snow-white linen sleeves, and rather tightly-fitting white or scarlet caps. How they contrive to keep their finery in such a spotless state, while their houses are so small and their furniture so scanty, is a problem which the stranger will find it hard to solve.

The philosophy of clothes has been most learnedly expounded by the famous Herr Teufelsdröckh, who was distinguished by the title of Professor der Allerlei-Wissenschaft, his province being to philosophise upon things in general. His treatise upon dress is of a most exhaustive nature, and his readers will admit that there can remain but little to be said new on the subject. Still, his axiom that "Society is founded upon cloth" might very well be taken as a text for a discourse which should expound the hidden influence that clothing has on character. Much as the Sage of Weissnichtwo might ridicule the notion of Man simply considered as a clothes-wearing animal, he yet might grant the possibility that a man should feel degraded when dressed in dirty rags, and should grow more self-respectful when wearing a clean suit. He might even concede that, in these new-fangled days, there may be something laudable in sticking to old costumes, and that when a man is sprung from worthy forefathers he may well feel proud of stepping in their quaint old square-toed shoes.

Certainly a week spent in the wilds of Dalecarlia may favour the concession of both these latter points. It was to Dalecarlia that Gustavus Vasa fled, when with fourscore other nobles his father was beheaded by murderous King Christian. There he raised a rustic army, and quickly drove the Danes all back again to Denmark, and himself reigned over Sweden well and wisely in their stead. Nowhere is his memory more revered than where the Dalecarlians came flocking to his flag. Nor is it surprising that the costumes which they wore are still in vogue with their descendants, who seem likewise to inherit the grave Puritan demeanour of the brave peasant-folk who fought against the tyranny of Denmark.

Cleanliness is akin to godliness, we are told; though I doubt if the old hermits would have endorsed the axiom. Certainly in Sweden the two qualities appear to hold a close relationship, so far as may be judged from outward acts of public

worship. The peasant congregation among whom I sat at Leksand were most earnest and attentive throughout a lengthy service, and I have rarely seen their equals in cleanliness and neatness. There were many hundreds—as many as fifteen, I guessed—assembled in the church. All were packed in narrow pews as close as they could sit; and the black coats on the one side formed a sombre contrast to the white caps on the other. On the high pew-doors here and there were perched small silent people, bedecked with yellow plumage like pantomime canary birds. Still smaller canaries were allowed to hop about upon the grass outside, in the care of elder sisters, or even male relations, who looked both proud and puzzled as they watched the precious charge confided to their keeping.

The sun was shining brightly when I came out of the church—I own, before the sermon. Inside as well as out the place was full of picturesqueness. Had Mr. Herkomer been there he would have found a score of charming subjects for his pencil or his easel. Of quaint and homely costume, and comely peasant feature, there were sketches to be made quite as suggestive of a picture as any of the studies he has brought us from Bavaria. One I specially remember as being worth remembrance: a father with a tiny yellow bundle in his arms, and gravely keeping guard over a couple of small yellow sprawlers at his feet. His long, close-buttoned, dark coat contrasted well with these bright colours, and he really looked so happy and contented with his simple homely duties, and there seemed such thorough honesty and manliness about him, that—but for the yellow bundle and the tumult which perhaps might have arisen from disturbing it—I should have been tempted to shake him by the hand, and assure him of my faith in the fact of his good fellowship. As I had not learned enough of his own language to say this, I let one of his canary birds peep shyly into my pocket and pick a biscuit out of it, whereat papa smiled gravely, and seemed greatly pleased.

Great Britons brag no little of their education system, and men skilful in the art of blowing their own trumpet have sent forth biggish blasts in favour of their board schools. It may be startling to find it placed on record that, by a law made so long ago as A.D. 1842, in Sweden every parish was provided with a

school; and that, within a decade of the passing of that Act, it was stated on authority that scarce one in a thousand was unable to read. These schools, being partly supported by the State, were wisely subject to the exercise of such constraining influence as was deemed needful to bring scholars underneath their roof. I find it upon record that a person must know how to read, and likewise must be able to repeat his catechism, or he will not be admitted to receive the Sacrament, and they who have not taken it are not allowed to marry. Thus may Cupid wear a spur to stimulate slow students, and the cause of education may profit by its use.

Whether reverence be better taught in Sweden than in England is a matter which the tourist may be puzzled to decide. But if he goes to church at Leksand he will surely be impressed by the reverential silence of that rustic congregation. Of the many hundreds gathered there together, I hardly saw a man or woman who had not a prayer-book pretty constantly in use. There seemed to be no shamming, or show, or make-believe. They all seemed to be in real earnest, and not assembled simply to yawn away an hour, or to smile and stare about them. I was struck by the absence of all sniffing and snuffling, and whispering, and coughing, and the like signs and symptoms of impatient inattention, whereby a village service—at least in my experience—is so very commonly enlivened and disturbed.*

Profuse bowing when they meet is an act of formal courtesy which is certainly conspicuous among the Swedish folk. Hat-brims have a hardish time of it in Stockholm. A week's wear must suffice to put them out of shape. Nor are hats the only articles which are set in movement for the greeting or good-byeing of a relative or friend. When a train or steamboat quits or nears a station or a quay, there is a bowing, and a kissing, and a waving of white handkerchiefs which is wonderful to see. Such social ways are harmless and innocent enough, and the tourist would do wisely not to sneer at them. Indeed, he might do foolishly if, when he gets the chance, he fails to give and take a kindly Swedish greeting. Shall I forget the pleasant smile of the pretty, bright-eyed

* I may notice here, as a further sign of reverence, that at Stockholm nearly all the men who took the Sacrament (a far greater proportion than is general in England) were distinguishable by their wearing a white neckcloth and white gloves.

maiden, as she stood framed in the doorway of her sister's house at Liden, and waved a last farewell as we went trotting down the road? Have I not still fresh in my mind's eye the pretty formal little curtsy which she dropped to me at bedtime when bidding me sleep well, and the like when at my leave-taking she warmly shook me by the hand?

Who knows but that, had not a third person been present, I might have been inspired with such a knowledge of her language as to whisper, "Snella flicka, gi meg en kyss!" or at least to have expressed my wishes in dog-Latin, which Lord Dufferin found so useful in his travels in high latitudes, and to have murmured "O tu pulchra puella, da mihi unum parvum osculum, id est cara res!"

Alas! old customs and old costumes alike are dying out, and are becoming every day more difficult to find. The inroad of a railway seems fatal to them both. Wherever an engine passes, old habits, of both sorts, are sure to pass away. The practical is sadly fatal to the picturesque. Soon there will be little to be learned by foreign travel, for nations grow monotonous in manners and in modes. I doubt if girls in board schools be taught to drop a curtsy, and I feel pretty sure that boys there seldom learn to make a bow.

Humility and reverence are qualities worth cultivating. In many parts of Sweden I certainly was struck with the quiet, self-respectful demeanour of the people, and the absence of all roughism and signs of savage life. Louts there were in plenty, and slow and stolid peasants, who may have been most difficult to move onward in any way one whit faster than their wont. But I saw no cruelty to animals,* and none of the indecency and dirtiness, which are too often conspicuous among country folk in countries nearer south. Of their reverence in public worship I have made remark; and hardly less noteworthy was the staid and quiet way in which they seemed to do their daily work, and the absence of that rudeness, and that rough-and-rowdy noisiness, and that disgusting coarseness and devil-may-careishness which are far too common

* The Swedes seem generally to treat their horses kindly. Those provided for the traveller are small, sure-footed animals, as they need to be, considering the roads they have to traverse. They mostly go at a good pace without any further stimulant than a cry of "Ha!" or "Puck! puck!"—a sound somewhat resembling the drawing of a cork. To bring them to a standstill the driver makes a shrill cry of "Purr-r-r-r!" by vibrating his lips.

nowadays among our British hobbledehoyas.

While I think over my Swedish trip a few small doubts occur to me. Although, trusting to my guidebook, I hoped to find plain English more useful than it proved to be, I doubt a Swedish traveller would even more be bothered by his ignorance of the language, if he tried to traverse Devonshire, as I did Dalecarlia, with the help of a small dictionary to make his wishes known. I doubt if it be reasonable to expect a Swedish peasant, who has probably been living all his life in his own country, to know English any better than I do Double Dutch. I doubt if many people in these high-pressure days will give themselves the trouble of learning a hard language merely for the sake of its advantage for a tour. And therefore I am doubtful if Sweden will be ever half so popular as Switzerland, as a place for making holiday and breathing the fresh air.

I have my doubts, moreover, if the Swedes be not, in some respects, quite equal to the Swiss, and for that matter, indeed, to the Great Britons themselves. Although doubtless a free country, I doubt whether in Sweden foreign beggars are permitted to infest the public streets, and drive the dwellers there half-crazy with blatant bands and barrel-organs, as they are still allowed to do in our happy land. I doubt, too, whether Stockholm, despite its short daylight and well-nigh Arctic winter, becomes ever such a dark and sunless dismal swamp of scarcely fathomable slush as London often sinks into during the winter. I doubt, likewise, if the poor of Stockholm become ever so debased as in the dingy courts and alleys to be found near Drury Lane, or in the cellars and back slums between the Thames and Bethnal Green. And I doubt more than all if in the whole of Sweden such a church-or-chapel-shunning population can be seen as may be met with near our collieries, and what are called "the teeming centres of industrial activity" which have been so highly praised by many British orators and pens.

The ship that brought me homeward bore away from home above three hundred Swedish emigrants, on their way to try their fortune in the wheatfields of the West. Except a biggish box, a blanket, and a bag or so of rye-cake, they appeared to carry with them not many household relics to remind them of their home.

They seemed mostly very poor, but I neither saw nor heard a sign of selfish grumbling or sour-faced discontent. If I might add one more to the doubts already mentioned, I should doubt whether the police would not have an easy time of it in Canada and the colonies had they no worse visitors to deal with than the Swedes.

DAN FARTHING'S ONLY SON.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

IN meditating for months, and years even, over the means of gratifying his irrepressible heart-hunger, Frank had drawn for himself so vivid a picture of the difficulties with which he would have to contend, the privations he would have to endure, that the reality agreeably disappointed him.

He had not indulged the hope that he would be able at once to live by his pencil, and he had planned in the first instance to look for a subsistence by teaching. In this scheme he was aided by his good friends at the rectory, who had taken much interest in his resolve, and by whose assistance he came up to London with one engagement already formed. His laborious, painstaking, patient disposition, and his overflowing good humour, fitted him admirably for the work, and in the course of a short time he had as many pupils as he could take without trenching too much on the time necessary for private practice, and for attendance on the art-school which he joined on his arrival in London. He had brought with him a considerable number of very carefully finished drawings, landscapes, and studies of rustic subjects, and he had been able to dispose of many of them; so that when he balanced his accounts at the end of the first six months, he had the satisfaction of finding that not only was the sum he had brought with him unbroken, but that he had, after paying all expenses, a few pounds of honourably-earned money to carry him through the next month or two. He did not, however, relax the abstemious and almost penurious habits he had seen fit to adopt. He breakfasted on oatmeal porridge, and went on the strength of that meal all day. He would dine on a handful of haricot beans, and make a luxurious supper off a cup of tea or cocoa and a roll. And he throve on it. His spirits rose as his prospects brightened, and he whistled at his work with infinite contentment. His step was elastic, his eye clear, his laugh gay, though it must not be

imagined that he was without his sad moments, when he thought, as he did every day, of the old lonely father at home. He wrote to him regularly every week, long, bright, cheerful letters, and he read and re-read, and treasured up the few brief responses that came from the old man, who was no great proficient in the art of penmanship.

A year had passed since the August morning when he had taken his last look at Horksmead. He had prospered beyond his hopes, but he had never felt more serious misgivings as to his ability to achieve that nobler success which he most coveted—the glory of a place, however humble, among the true artists of his country. He had reached an elevation from which, looking back on the plain he had left, it seemed far away; but when he turned his eyes to the sunlit summits they appeared more remote than ever, and the ascent steeper than it ever seemed before. The thought did not depress him or make him waver in his purpose, but it made his mood more serious and thoughtful. It was in one of these graver moods that he stood one morning before his easel contemplating a nearly finished picture, and criticising, with Spartan severity, drawing, composition, and colour, when the door opened behind him, and in walked "old Dan Farden" himself, gaiters, corduroys, brass buttons, and all.

"Father!" exclaimed Frank, with a start. "I did not hope to see you here; but it is very pleasant to see you, and looking so well too."

"Yes, bor, ay a' come to see yow. Ay saay, what's the proper price ov a cab up here from Shudditch?"

"I don't know, father," said Frank, with a laugh. "I walked when I came."

"Rayht, bor, rayht. But yow oughter know what the price is. The chap arst ma fowr shillins', an ay paid 'un; but ay should laike to know ef 'twas rayht." And then looking at the picture on the easel he said, "Did yow du that, booöy?"

"Yes, father?"

"Well, that's prime—for a picter. What du yow get for thing laike that now?"

"Oh, at present, father, I have to get pretty much what I can. I am going to ask ten pounds," he said.

"Lord a mussy, booöy," exclaimed the old man, "yow wun't niver get it."

"Perhaps not, father. If I can't I must get as much as I can: but I think it is worth it."

"Well, booöy, well; yow'll see. And how are yow a-gettin' on? Spent all your money?"

"Put on your glasses, father," said the lad, turning to his desk and producing from it his bank-book, in which the old man read with amazement that Frank had a balance of one hundred and eighty-five pounds, while at the same time the young fellow showed him that his purse was not unfurnished of petty cash.

Old Dan Farden's countenance fell. He had come up to town pretty well assured that the boy would have had enough of it by this time; that his money would be spent; that he would have been sickened by trouble and disappointment; and that his health would probably have suffered from London smoke; assured that he would have now only to offer his forgiveness, to clear his score, to wait while he packed his trunks, and to carry him back triumphantly from his silly dream to Horksmead and a sensible life as a farmer. And here was the unconscionable rascal rosy, blithe, merry, with a balance at his banker's, and actually going to ask ten pounds for a picture of which "the paints" had not perhaps cost him three shillings!

"You don't mean to come back to Horksmead, then?" he said, after a pause.

"I don't mean to give up my work, father," replied Frank.

"Yow moind yow'll ha' to maake your own waay, booöy?"

"Yes, father; and it is no more than you have done before me, and bravely done. You wouldn't wish me to be less of a man than my father? Father, I don't care about the property; I don't think of it; but I wish this step of mine did not vex you."

"That du, bor: that du. But somehow 't don't fare so bad as 't did at fust. I'd set ma heart on seein' yow in the old plaace, and—but there, it ain't no use a-talkin'. Yow'll goo yowr own waay. And so, what do yow saay about dinner?"

"There isn't much to offer you, father, here. Can you pick a cold mutton bone?" asked Frank.

"Ay, booöy. I've maad ma dinner off wuss than that, many's the daay. But ay ain't come up to Lunnion to feed on yow. Yow come and ha' yowr dinner along ov me."

After dinner Frank proposed that they should go to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, perhaps with some latent thought that, seeing the splendours on the walls,

and the admiration they excited, his father would think better of the profession of an artist.

"Exhibition?" said the old man. "Well, ay don't mind if ay du. This is an idle daay, yow know, booöy."

Arrived at Trafalgar Square, Frank led the way first to the National Gallery, where he called his father's attention to the Garvagh Raphael, then just purchased, as he told him, for nine thousand pounds.

"Lord a mussy me, booöy! Yow don't saay so! What, that little mite! Why, lor! you taak ma breath awaay. Nine thousand pound for that little thing? Thaay must a' had a mort ov money as give it."

Many a fashionable visitor at the Royal Academy smiled at the rustic figure of the big man of Horksmead, as he accompanied his handsome son through the rooms. Finding a vacant seat, he threw himself into it to collect his faculties; while Frank, with the ardour of a devotee, tried to understand the mystery of Millais's Romans Leaving Britain. The mingled blues and greens and russets of the sea, the fierce passion of the woman who is being bereft of her lord, that union of delicacy and strength—how did he attain them?

The father watched him with a puzzled expression. How was it possible the boy could take more interest in these things than in oats, and wheat, and barley, and "turmut," and keeping up the old house at Horksmead. It was like witchcraft to him. And yet, in the mellowed mood of mind that had come over him, he wished that he could enter more into his boy's feelings; for there was in the burly, rugged frame, and beneath the stern manner, a tender and affectionate nature, the yearnings of which his slow speech and scanty store of words were inadequate to utter, even if the habits of self-repression, fixed in him from his earliest years, had been less operative than they were.

Presently his thoughts strayed to other themes, and the sense of wonder began to give way to weariness. His son took him to look at this, that, or the other picture, and he complied with his wish good-humouredly enough, but with evident lack of interest, constantly adding:

"But we shall lose our seats, booöy; we must ha' good seats."

Even Frank, who usually read his father's thoughts well, was puzzled by this anxiety about the seats until the mystery was explained by his asking abruptly:

"Ay saay, booöy, when's th' exhibition gooin' to begin? We shall be laite."

"Exhibition, father?" said Frank.

"Why this is the exhibition!"

"What the menden, bor!" cried the old man, starting up. "Why, it's nuthin' but picters!"

There was a momentary flush of vexation on Frank's face, but it was rapidly succeeded by a laugh as he recognised the width of the great gulf that had to be bridged before they could have one common thought about art; and for the rest of the day he spoke no more on the theme. He even accompanied his father to Madame Tussaud's, and with imperturbable good-humour heard him institute comparisons between the gorgeous figures there and the Garvagh Raphael—comparisons by no means in favour of Sanzio's Madonna.

Frank's career, as we have seen, was on the whole a successful one; but he soon took the measure of his own powers, and acknowledged to himself that he was no genius. He was deficient in imagination; his range was very limited. But in a restricted field he attained something very like perfection, and he was fortunate enough to obtain a place at the Royal Academy exhibition with a picture that caught the public taste. Commissions came to him thickly; he was able to give up teaching, and to devote himself entirely to painting. He met with generous encouragement from artists of assured position, prospered more and more, and presently took to himself a wife, the daughter of one of his teachers who had discerned and cherished the capabilities of the rustic aspirant to artistic honours. His good old father came up to see him once or twice a year, and listened with ever-increasing bewilderment as he heard of the prices his pictures realised. He thought the people who gave one and even two hundred pounds for them "hadn't got all their buttons."

"You dan't saay so, booöy!" he would exclaim; "but you wun't niver sell one for nine thousand pound, like that little 'un in the show, will you?"

"No, dad," Frank would answer with a laugh, "I don't think I shall. But pictures are like wine, they improve by keeping, and I won't venture to say what these may sell for when they are mellowed by age. But they're creeping up, daddy; and I saw one of mine sold by auction the other day which fetched four times what I got for it."

"Oh, ay. You didn't take your pigs to the rayht market, bor. You'll know better now, won't you?"

But though they chatted thus the old man never looked with complacency on the abandonment of the old place. In his heart he was not reconciled to the step, and as he paced the fields at Horksmead, or wandered among the carved and trimmed shrubs of his garden, he would often fall back into the mood of indignant wonder that anyone—much less his only son—should have been able to relinquish these delights to go "and maak picters up in Lannon." And year by year his locks whitened, and the furrows deepened, though he was hale and strong still. He had, too, his milder, meditative hours, and he had never, I think, been happier than when Frank and his wife came down to Horksmead for their autumnal visit, and he danced upon his knee a happy imperious little cherub of a grandchild.

Frank was seated one morning at his easel when an artist friend dropped in, well freighted with artistic gossip. He had done the round of the studios, so far as his connection permitted; knew what the Academicians were going to send in, had stores of second-hand reports of pictures he had not seen; could give some wrinkles about capital models; had come upon charming rustic bits that were worth studying; had some spicy intelligence of jealousies between certain artists of note; retailed some ill-natured bon mots of the great art critic; and so rattled on with immeasurable self-content as he blew great clouds of potent shag, and Frank worked steadily on, tolerating rather than liking it all.

"But I must be going, old man," the visitor said at length, coming up to the easel. "I say, old fellow, you'll have to subdue that light; it takes all repose out of the picture. The whole of this bank ought to be in shadow. Oh, by the way, talking of banks, have you heard of the last great bank smash? The City and Wessex has come down an awful cropper; liabilities a couple of millions, they say; assets nothing-and-a-half and several pious reputations, which will be disposed of at an alarming sacrifice. You haven't anything in it, I hope?"

"No, nothing," said Frank, very intent on his work.

"Then, scissors and gooseberries! Frank, you've been drinking new wine wherein is

excess, for I'm a kippered herring if you're not daubing your work like a house-painter. Come away, man; don't put another touch on it now, or you'll ruin it. You've done more harm to it in the last two minutes than you'll do good in a week. Come away;" and he laid violent hands on him, dragging him away from the easel. "Why, my dear old fellow," he exclaimed, "forgive my joking; I didn't know; but you look like a ghost. You are really ill."

"I am a little giddy, I think," said Frank; "but I shall be right in a few minutes. I will go and bathe my head. Good-bye, Hartley."

"I wouldn't leave you like this," said the kind-hearted fellow, "but that I know you will be well looked after. I shall look you up to-morrow. Ta, ta! Take care of yourself."

As soon as his good-natured friend had gone, Frank proceeded to wash his brushes, to clean his palette, and to go through the other phases of what he called his "Saturday settling," for he had brought up with him from the country the habit of observing the rest-day religiously, and he was most unartistically methodical and neat. When everything was settled he made his way to the room which was designated "the nursery," though as yet, besides the rampant little rascal of whom we have spoken, there was only one small decimal fraction of humanity to tenant it.

"Minnie, dear," said he, as he closed the door behind him, "I've just had some very bad news."

"Fiddle-de-dee, sir!" said that practical little woman. "You're not going to frighten us with your long faces; is he, my jewel?" Here a shower of interrogative caresses was bestowed upon the sleeping beauty. "We know what it is. That nasty model of yours has a black eye, and I always said he drank; you know I did. He makes the whole house smell when he comes into it. I say, hubby, just look here; isn't she a little beauty? Oh, Frank, did you ever see such a lovely little dimple? Oh, my precious."

"No, Minnie, dear. It's much worse than a black eye—even though it were baby's." Here the young matron shuddered perceptibly. "Hartley has just been in, and he tells me the City and Wessex Bank has failed. Father trusted it absolutely, and I believe all the savings of his life were invested in it. If what Hartley tells me is true he is completely ruined.

I must go down to Horksmead at once, and learn how the matter stands."

There is no eloquence to be compared with a woman's. Wrenching herself from the contemplation of baby's dimples, the wife threw her arms round him, and in one long comprehensive kiss assured him that she understood his apprehensions and sympathised in his grief. She divined his fears, she anticipated his plans.

"Hartley talks wildly, Frank, sometimes. You must not take it for granted that what he says is true. But give my love to grandpa, and tell him that his room is always ready, and that he must come and make his home with us."

And with that loving message to supplement his own filial devotion Frank sought the old familiar home, where he found that he had not over-estimated the magnitude of the calamity. The structure which had been builded by the care and prudence of a lifetime had fallen at one crash, and not one stone was left upon another.

The old man received him with stern bluntness.

"What brings yow here, booöy?" he said. "But ay know what it is. Yow've hard that the bank's gone to smash. But yow can't do no good. Ay must fayht my fayht alone. Ay done it afore, and ay ken do it agen. And yow ha' done yowr fayhting alone; ay didn't help yow, and yow marn't help me."

"You gave me a good start, father," Frank began.

"Ay, ay, booöy," he interrupted. "Ay give ye a hundred pound. Ay mind it."

"Yes, and you gave me more than that, father. I thwarted you in your dearest wish. I spoilt the purpose of your life; I overclouded its brightness. I thought the cloud would pass, and that you would come to see that I was right. You have never done that, and yet in all these years you have never given me one word of reproach. Do you think I have not felt that? That if it is possible for me now to be of some service to you, to take some part of the care and trouble that has fallen on you, through no fault of your own, that to do so will not be to me like the payment of a holy debt?"

The old man's voice was husky with emotion as he answered: "My booöy, I'm proud on ye. Ay was hard on ye when yow would goo yowr own waay, but ay wanted to du the rayht thing by ye, an' ay a' wanted to du the rayht thing by all men."

"And honourably have you done so always, father," said Frank.

"Ay, booöy, an' ay will do. No man shall nivver say that ho was the wuss because he had dealins with Dan Farden," said the old man proudly.

"Will it be complete ruin for you, father?" asked Frank.

"Yes, booöy; I reckon that'll be about the figure. Ay can't saay for sartin just yet, but ay reckons ay'll have to begin life all over agen. Ay shall paay everybody to the last ha'penny, ay think; but there wun't be nothin' over. Ay've worked it all out i' ma mind, and ay maak it out that there'll be enough to paay everybody, and then ay shall have to begin agen, as ay did more nor forty year ago. Ay'm strong and hearty yet. Thank God for that."

"No, no, father," exclaimed Frank; "you must not think of that. If all has gone you must come and live with us. Minnie charged me to tell you so, with her best love."

"Do yow tell her I thank her kindly, booöy. She's got the heart of a lady, and yow've got a good thing there, bor; but yow marn't maak a woman o' me. 'Taint no use o' me saayin' ay don't feel it, losing all that ay've been workin' fer all ma life, but one waay ay'm thankful for it, it kinder brings us closer together than we've been afore. Yow and yowr good wife marn't think ay don't feel yowr kindness because ay saay no. But ay must goo ma own waay, and fayht my own fayht over agen. It ain't no use a-talkin' any more about it now. Mebbe it won't turn out quite so bad as it seem, but ay can't tell yow any more yet."

There were further conversations, but always to the same effect; and Frank, after a day or two, finding he was unable to be of service, and that his presence and his arguments seemed rather to vex and disturb than to soothe and persuade his father, returned to London to wait for a more favourable opportunity.

Some weeks passed without his hearing how matters progressed, or receiving any answers to his weekly letters, but this did not make him uneasy. Although he feared that the ruin would be complete, he knew that the winding-up of affairs must take time, and that his father was not likely to write until there was news of importance to send. Still, day by day, he watched with increasing anxiety for the postman's visit; and, as soon as he felt that he could

do so without wounding his father's susceptibilities, he once more went down to Horksmead.

Dan Farthing's cottage stood in a gentle hollow in a bend of the road, so that it did not come into view till the traveller was close upon it, and Frank, as he turned the angle, was surprised to see scaffolding poles erected and labourers at work. He quickened his pace through the winding paths of the quaint Dutch garden, and coming upon a workman whom he knew, soon learnt that the place had been sold, and that the rugged, self-reliant, proud old man had taken up his dwelling in a poor mean cottage.

With a bitter pang at heart he hastened to this cottage; a low, thatched, mud-walled, one-storeyed building, consisting of only two rooms. It was in some such dwelling as this that his father had begun life, but he himself had had no experience of a home so squalid save as a picturesque object for his sketches. He remembered many of the additions being made to his father's house, but in his earliest recollections it was still a comfortable and commodious place. He paused at the threshold, and there was no sound within; he stepped on to the low brick floor, and the atmosphere of the dark room was stifling; he could hardly stand upright in the cabin. A plain deal table and a few wooden chairs were all its furniture, and there was no sign that it had been recently occupied. His father, he thought, was probably in the fields. But no; there was a sound from that inner room, a voice that he knew. It was even smaller, this second apartment, than the one in which he stood; it was almost filled by one rush-bottomed chair and a wretched pallet, and on this pallet lay his father, untended, alone.

He was muttering and talking rapidly. As his son entered he turned an eye upon him, and paused for an instant, but he did not appear to recognise him.

"Ay tell'ee ay ken du it," he said; "ay'm strong and hearty. Owe no man anything—ay ha' paad 'em all. You shan't write to the booöy; there ain't no call for that; ay won't ha' yow du it. Ay ha' med ma waay once, and ay ken du it again. They're a-gooiin' dog cheap. Ay nivver bought 'em at that. Throw it out o' th' winder ay tell'ee, throw it out o' th' winder—ay won't ha' no charity. Ay ha' paad 'em all, an' ay can work. Yow won't nivver git nine thousand pound;

boöy, yow can't come up to that. Why don't you shut the door, Nanny? Bolt it fast ay tell'ee. Ay wun't ha' 'em come to look at me; get along wi' ye; ay don't want no help."

Frank was shocked and bewildered beyond measure, but he roused himself promptly to the necessity for action. Hurrying to the nearest cottage, he despatched a messenger for a doctor and a nurse, and he learnt that his friends at the Rectory had been for some time on the Continent, and, though he was thus deprived of valuable counsel and assistance in the hour of need, he was relieved from the sense of disheartening surprise that they should have allowed this wretchedness to befall without his knowledge.

With all convenient speed he was back at the cottage, and there through the long night-watches he sat bathing the fevered brow, around which the crown of silver hairs shone in the dim light like a glory; listening to incoherent utterances which disclosed, as lightning flashes reveal the landscape, the intense suffering that had been undergone, and the tameless pride that could not brook a pitying eye.

Towards morning the old man fell into a quiet sleep, and Frank, worn out with his journey and his watching, dozed uneasily in the rickety chair in which repose was impossible. Every now and then he started, half ashamed that he should have lost consciousness even for an instant. The nurse had no such scruples. Frank had seen that she was tired, and had told her to rest if she could. She had extemporised a very fair lounge in the adjoining room, and was soon snoring away as though the world had not a sorrow to be soothed. Even in the midst of his grief and his care Frank could but smile at the ridiculous situation in which he was placed, for the hovel was so small that the substantial form of the nurse almost blocked up the doorway, and had he needed to leave his station he must have passed over it. The note of the night-jar as it swept by thrilled him for a moment like an evil omen, and he turned to the bed with a spasm of alarm; but his father was breathing regularly, and was smiling in his sleep. Then trivial things took hold on his mind with a power which was at once tyrannical and absurd. He found himself watching with an interest only due to sentient life the shadows on wall and ceiling. More than once he laughed softly as some ludi-

crous resemblance to persons whom he had known struck his fancy. Then, somehow, there was present to his mind the bright and cheerful nursery at St. John's Wood, but surely it was altered. There used to be no window in the corner, and the ceiling used to be higher. This could not be healthy for the children; but he must make no noise; they are asleep now. Ah, clumsy, that chair will fall and wake them; he hastens to catch it; and his head comes forward with a jerk, and he starts; and there with wide open eyes lies the good father looking at him.

"Why, bor," he exclaims feebly, "ay didn't expect to see yow. What have yow come for?"

Frank's only answer was to stoop down over the homely couch, and reverently to kiss the pale furrowed brow; but it was a sufficient answer.

"It's good of ye, bor, to come. But ay told 'em not to send for ye. Ay've been a bit queer, ay think; but ay'm all rayht agen now; an' ay must get up and goo to work. Just lend us a hand, will yow?"

"You must not think of getting up for a day or two, father," said Frank. "You have been worse than you think; but a few days will set you up again, and then we must get you out of this place."

The old man made an effort to raise himself, but fell back on his pillow.

"Ay believe yow're right, bor," he said. "I'm as weak as a cat. But yow marn't mind about the place. 'Taint up to the cottage, is it? but that'll do for a bit, and ay'll soon mend it, you'll see. Ay ain't to be beat. Old Nanny, she come in every day and du for me a bit. She's mortal bad with her rheumatics at times, but she manages to get up and cook me a bit o' wittles, and tidy the place. She's willing, poor old gal; but, Lord bless yow, she's no more intellec' than a child o' two."

The old man improved steadily, and in the course of a day or two he was able to get out in the bright sunshine, leaning on his son's arm. Frank dared not propose even now that he should go to live with him permanently in London, but he argued, and in this he was supported by the doctor, that a change of air was essential for him; and heatlast obtained his consent to the proposal that he should pay a visit to St. John's Wood as soon as he was able to travel, as the shortest way to regain the strength which was essential for the working out of his own plans. Oncethere it would be their business to keep him.

And they knew how to set to work. The bright and winsome ways of his daughter-in-law, the considerate care of Frank and his evident delight in keeping him, and, above all, the fascinations of his exacting little grandson, took away all sense of irksomeness. They did not—these good people—attempt to argue him out of his scheme of beginning life anew; but if ever the return to Horksmead was spoken of they found some plausible reason for postponing it, and the old man recurred to it at constantly increasing intervals of time. At first he used to say that he must go back; then he would exclaim that he really ought to go; a little longer, and he would say, "it fared as if he never was to go;" and then at last he acknowledged that he didn't mind if he never did go.

And so it has come about that the brave and sturdy old fellow is a fixture in Frank's household, and is loved by every member of it. He likes to sit with a long churchwarden in the studio, with an ever fresh sense of the wonder of the thing, watching his boy at work, and it was only the other day he said:

"Yow'd ha' been in a bad case now, booöy, if yow'd a stopped wi' me, as ay wanted ye tu. Yow chuse for yowrselt, and yow chuse rayht."

"It vexed you at the time, father," said Frank.

"That did, booöy, cruel," he replied simply.

"But you agree to it now, father?" asked his son with an assured smile.

"Ay, booöy; hearty, ay du. I never thought to ha' done it. But ay was a pig-headed old fool. Yow done rayht. And yow was honourable and brave all through, and ay'm proud on ye, ma booöy. Yow've the old man's blessin' on yowr work; I 'gree to it hearty."

A NATIONAL CONTRAST.

SOME two months ago I read with much interest the report of a lecture delivered before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute by Dr. W. W. Hunter, and entitled, *What England has done for India*. By an imposing array of authoritative statements and statistics the lecturer seems to have demonstrated the fact of a vast general improvement, physical and moral, throughout that great Empire under British rule. I am glad to be set right, for I must confess that hitherto I have had a vague idea that England had rather "done" than "done

for" India. This lecture also reveals the spirit—fearless, open, and manful—in which England's greatest conquest was won, held, and justified to this day, for the lecture concludes with this bold statement: "Our history in India has been chequered by occasional mistakes, but on the whole it forms a splendid narrative of empire fairly won, and honestly governed in the interests of the people."

I, an American and a Republican, am free to say that I like England's strong-handed and strong-willed way of carrying the war of Anglo-Saxon civilisation into Africa—and India, if they will take that civilisation in no other way: driving on the laggards in the world's great march with the bayonet—better than our own temporising, vacillating, deprecating Indian policy, known as "the Quaker Policy," since philanthropists of the school of Penn, deprived of their vocation by the abolition of slavery, have turned their sympathies and their efforts from the "down-trodden black man" to "the noble red man"—to those wronged and persecuted "wards of the nation," who have been hunted and driven to bay in our Western States and territories, till at last a quarter of a million of them are cooped up in miserable reservations amounting to only some three hundred and fifty million acres of land! While that policy, through its cumbrous administration and its complex machinery, perpetuates old wrongs and fosters new iniquities, protecting under all changes a monstrous traffic in munitions of war and maddening "fire-water," its spirit is yet a perpetual confession of invasion, usurpation, and wrong-doing.

I respect England the more for making little pretext of waging her wars of conquest and pushing her vast enterprises of trade chiefly in a missionary spirit, as the great civiliser and Christianiser of the outside barbarian. British conquest and colonisation are simply the natural growth of the giant Great Britain—first tossing out his lusty limbs, then rolling out his sturdy trunk from his native island-bed, now become but a pillow, and that a narrow and uneasy one, for his mighty, regal head. He must have room, and he takes it—that is all. No, not all. He makes, if not a virtue, a glory of the fact that, having "a giant's strength," he uses it "like a giant," never dreaming of repentance, or restitution, or retreat. This is the imperial principle. Under its comfortable sanction England moves and stands, grasps and

holds. We, urged by as dire a necessity—the growth, not alone of the young American giant, but of old-world colossi—make our conquests over a profounder and more hopeless barbarism than that of India and Africa in apparent defiance of the genius of our own nationality, and of our vaunted central republican principle; the doctrine that all men are born free and equal, with absolutely equal and inalienable rights to life and liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness, each in his own way. That is what is the matter with us. That is what handicaps America in the race of conquest and national aggrandisement. We creep on the coveted possessions of our wild neighbour and take them from him piecemeal, and even while we take them weakly acknowledge his divine right to have and to hold and to dedicate to eternal savagery some of the fairest and fruitfulest lands on the continent—lands which his fathers, in the unrecorded, but not recordless past, wrested from some nobler and far more enlightened race. So it is that the Republic comes from her Indian conquests, not as a victor, purple-robed and laurel-crowned, but rather as a penitent, clad in sackcloth, with ashes on her bright head, crying, not “Vici!” but “Peccavi!” This peculiar self-condemnatory spirit, which bears no fruit “meet for repentance;” this perpetual plea of “guilty,” while the crime, if crime there be, runs on; this squeamishness, which is giving us a character for national hypocrisy; is a comparatively modern element in our political morality. Our Puritan Fathers carried light weight in the shape of an Indian policy. They were little troubled by humanitarian scruples in regard to the stern work of dispossessing the heathen round about them. They were always ready, spiritually and practically, for a “bont” with the “bloody savages.” The musket leaned against the altar. They neither admitted the sanctity nor the necessity of savage existence. They would have set down the modern idea that an Indian’s life balances a white man’s as a piece of monstrous sentimentalism. The godliest man among them, and the most humane, could have despatched a prowling Pequod or Mohican or two before breakfast with little detriment to his devotions or his digestion. Honestly believing themselves the chosen people appointed to exterminate heathenism and barbarism from the fair face of the new world, they sturdily hewed their way through the wilderness with “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

Such as would not come under the ægis of the law of Moses and the commonwealth, under the yoke of the Gospel and honest toil, had to go each “to his own place.” The ark of Christian civilisation moved on slowly but surely, and brief was the mourning for the pagans, who fell to right and left.

Afghanistan and Zululand are not precisely in the way of England’s national expansion. She has to make somewhat of a detour to include them in the grand, beneficent sweep of her power and progress; but if she takes their peoples in hand, they certainly are not altogether worthless and hopeless charges. The Zulu is not only brave, but capable of a high degree of discipline, and will at least make a good war-machine. The Afghan has a civilisation of his own, on which the higher civilisation of his conqueror may be grafted if you can get the gnarly thorn-tree well under; while the average American-Indian of the West and South-West is an impracticable, almost an impossible subject. He blocks the march of the world with his obstinate barbarism and the line of his desolate reservations. But the mighty tide of emigration is everywhere coming up against that bristling barrier; at first gently creeping, then surging and swelling; and it is not in the power of the Great Republic and all the Quakers to keep it back much longer.

The Indians of the mountains and the plains of the far West are for the most outlaws and paupers, eternally inimical to civilisation, looking with unutterable contempt on all its arts, comforts, and pursuits. An Indian of even low degree snorts with scorn at the mere suggestion of manual labour; while a chief, though in rags and half-starved, draws himself up with lordly dignity as he says: “White man work—squaw work—pappoose work—heap-big Indian no work.” That the despised squaw is more human and humane than her mate—more amenable to civilising influences—is, perhaps, owing to the fact that she does work, for herself and others, and is useful and helpful according to her lights. The Ute chief, Johnson, assaulted and afterwards killed the United States agent, Meeker, the good old man whose hospitality he had often enjoyed. Johnson’s wife, Susan, the sister of our ally, the great chief, Ouray, saved the agent’s aged wife from death, and his heroic daughter from outrage infinitely worse than death. Some years ago this Ute woman was herself a captive. Taken by her tribe’s hereditary enemies, the Arapahoes, she

was about to be tortured and burned—was already bound to the stake, in fact—when she was rescued by United States' soldiers. It is a curious fact that the scene of this signal deliverance was the site of the colony afterwards founded by Mr. Meeker. Susan (the name given her by the officer who cut with his sword the cords which bound her to the stake) has now paid her debt of gratitude. It seems that she is the first Indian Woman's Rights woman on record, actually breaking in on the sacred council of the chiefs, and speaking "as one having authority," which she did to plead for the lives and the liberation of the White River captives. But to return to the Indian proper. He will hunt in the dull season, when fighting is slack, if he can have some ten thousand acres for his private hunting-ground, and if Government and traders will furnish him with the latest improvements in the way of rifle and shot-gun, for he discards and despises the primitive and poetic bow and arrow. He will seldom fish, as that is an avocation which requires some patience, and is too like work. Squaws fish. For the most part he lives on Government rations, and is clothed with Government garments, issued at the agencies. When the Utes destroyed the buildings of the White River Agency they took good care to bear away all the stores of ammunition, provisions, and goods. In a report of a late visit of the Secretary of the Interior to the Great Indian Territory, where dwell the most peaceful and civilised of the tribes, I find a sharp contrast drawn between that Territory and the State of Kansas:

"On the Kansas side are found well-cultivated fields, the fences of which extend to the line which marks the Indian boundary; comfortable houses, schools, churches, and other evidences of advanced civilisation, thrift, and enterprise. Beyond the geographical line is a blank wilderness, stretching southward for many miles, and entirely destitute of all animal and vegetable life except that which is supplied by nature."

Nearly all this region is, I believe, capable of cultivation; but in Colorado, where we now have the most serious difficulty with the Indians, and where, though only numbering seven thousand all told, they yet hold fifteen million acres, there are rocky, sterile tracts of mountain land, incalculably rich in minerals, but supporting little animal life, bringing forth neither

bloom nor verdure; so black, so barren, that it seems that the savage Pluto of those regions has not only dragged down to his mysterious golden palace Proserpine, but mother-in-law Ceres as well. Yet the Indian clings to these unlovely places as fiercely as to the greenest, fairest wild park of the Great Range.

We are not as pious as were our Puritan ancestors. We do not claim to have a warrant from the God of Israel, and the sanction of the law of Moses, to exterminate such of these people as we can neither convert nor control, who are so many savage "dogs in the manger," sullenly standing guard over vast treasure packed away under mountain ledges, over unproductive fields, lying fallow for thousands of years, capable of feeding thousands of honest working men and women. But we can take our warrant from Nature, moaning under the burden of the secret of that hidden treasure, sighing over the loneliness and the lifelessness of those desolate plains; of Nature, who has almost done with that primitive, experimental type of humanity. We can claim the sanction of the stern, inexorable law of necessity. The Old World is moving us on, and we must move the Red Man on. Very soon the civilisation of the Pacific coast will come to meet that of the Atlantic, as the two trans-continental railways met half way a few years ago. The barbarism of humanity in the shape of the Indian, and the savagery of Nature in the shape of sterility, will find themselves between two fires, and must melt away.

In the meantime certain reforms in our Indian policy are imperatively demanded by public opinion, and some of the most beautiful theories of humanitarian philosophers are giving way before the stern logic of events. Not much longer in our dealings with the obstinately savage tribes can be maintained the old fiction, flattering to their pride but fatal to their real interests, which recognises them as foreign "principalities and powers," with whom we are to hold diplomatic relations and concoct treaties, ostensibly to be "for ever" binding, but which for ever prove but gossamer webs woven across the track of the westward march of Empire. The only honest and humane as well as manly and masterful course is to make them subjects of the dominant race, amenable to and protected by its laws, and to have no more humbug about the matter.

The monstrous hypocrisy of our present system of dealing with this unhappy

people is even worse than its cruelty and injustice. We affect to respect, while we rob them. We send them missionaries and mercenaries at the same time. A good agent, like Mr. Meeker, is appointed now and then, and invariably comes in to reap an awful harvest of hate and suspicion sown by his bad predecessors.

A United States official who has seen much of the workings of our cumbersome Indian bureau in the far West, and of "the ways which are dark and tricks which are vain" of Indian agents and rings, says: "An Indian is not a lovable creature nor a desirable neighbour, but, of all the despicable and detestable set of villains at large, I consider those who plunder and steal from the Indians the worst. First, because the Indians have not the means nor the intelligence to detect the actual thieves and protect themselves by civilised means; second, because of the fearful consequences of an Indian outbreak to those who are innocent of any wrong."

Many practical, thinking people in America are demanding the transfer of the Indian Bureau to the War Department, believing that the army can deal with the nation's troublesome wards, not only more authoritatively and effectually, but more honestly and economically. If this be done, our army officers, for the most part men of undoubted honour and valour, must be protected in the discharge of their duty and left unhampered by humiliating congressional enactments like the *posse comitatus* clause in our late Army Bill, which forbids our soldiers to fire unless first attacked. To orders based on this clause Major Thornburgh fell a victim in the late Ute revolt. When suddenly confronted, and about to be surrounded by his savage foes, he was urged by his scout, an old Indian fighter, to open fire on them, as his only hope, but replied, in the piteous agony of a brave heart: "My God! I dare not; my orders are positive, and if I violate them and survive, a court-martial and ignominious dismissal may follow. I feel as though myself and men were to be murdered."

But though changes of policy and transfers of executive authority may simplify the ugly old problem somewhat, it will remain a problem still. Says the official above quoted: "A more honest issue of corn and beef, appropriated for the Indians, would keep them under better control, and in a more Christian frame of mind. Self-preservation is the first law of

nature, and whatever else we may think of him, an Indian is a natural production, and starving human nature will assert itself."

Doubtless, but the Indian cannot be fed for ever on corn he does not plant and beef he does not raise; he cannot expect to have a small armoury for a wigwam, and a whole province for his hunting-ground.

Our Indian service, in addition to the scandalous frauds and corruptions it engenders and fosters, is very costly; and though there are people, especially among the poets, who hold that these interesting aborigines, like potentates and queen-bees, are exempt from the great law of God and nature—the law of labour—there are others, especially among the working people, who object to being taxed much longer to support any class in insolent idleness, and who plainly say that, with all due respect for the "noble red man," his room is getting to be better than his company. How, under any system, is he to be rendered less of a burden and a terror? By teaching him Christianity, and convincing him of the dignity of labour? But while the missionary must take his Bible in one hand and his life in the other, and the agriculturist must drive his plough under a military escort, it is plain that the solution of the long problem must be a question of time, and perhaps of many martyrdoms, while as to our national errors and wrong-doing toward the Indian, that is a question of eternity, and perhaps of many judgments.

But, oh, our brothers, be not in haste to anticipate judgments, and demand not of us impossibilities. Expect us not to keep inviolate even our present covenants, made in good but rash faith, to preserve from intrusion and invasion the lessened possessions of our wild neighbours. Bid us not to say to the mighty, ever-swelling tide of civilisation and enterprise, breaking on that dark and silent shore, in a foam of light and a murmur of arrested progress, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!"

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XIV. JOSEPH GIVES EVANGELINE A PROOF OF HIS LOVE.

THE years glided peacefully away, and no event of importance disturbed the repose of the Silver Isle. Evangeline, elected by Joseph and Gabrielle as their queen, wore her crown with the innocent audacity of childhood, and ruled her little

kingdom with absolute authority. She was capricious, but not tyrannical, imperious, but not boastful; in their home amusements and woodland rambles her moods and whims were anxiously consulted by her young subjects, who were most happy when she was pleased and satisfied. That she should be obeyed appeared to be natural; it was a pleasant servitude, and Evangeline's close connexion with Ranf enabled her to introduce colour and variety into the lives of the children.

Ranf's position in the isle did not improve as the years passed by. He lived his lonely life upon the mountain of snow, and did not even ask from the islanders the service of occasional companionship. He was at times compelled to move among them, needing certain articles and necessities of life which he had no independent means of obtaining. These he bought and paid for with scrupulous honesty, driving no hard bargains, and using as few words as possible in the negotiations. Shortly after his arrival upon the Silver Isle he presented to Father Sebastian a paper signed by Mauvain, requesting that Ranf should be allowed to extract silver from the mine for a few days now and then, if it did not interfere with the arrangements of the islanders. The dwarf was informed that he was free to work the mine when he pleased, upon the condition that Mauvain's royalty of one-tenth was respected. He availed himself of the permission, and being a man of enormous strength and endurance succeeded in obtaining such treasure as he desired by working a few weeks in every year. With this silver he purchased, through the agency of the captains of the vessels which at rare intervals visited the isle, what he most needed and desired. He sent for rope, chains, goats, and birds, which without help he conveyed to his mountain huts. The goats were of a superior kind to those which were indigenous to the isle, and were much admired; the birds were chiefly pigeons, which he reared with the greatest pains and care. Dogs also he bought, so that his huts were surrounded with life subservient to his will. His amazing industry leading apparently to no result, at first raised some little curiosity, and the islanders asked each other what this strange creature wanted with ropes and chains, and why he had built for himself three huts, one near the valley, one in the centre of the mountain, and one within a couple of hundred yards of the topmost peak. None could

answer these nor other questions that suggested themselves, and there was not a man on the isle who cared to enquire further into the matter by venturing into that lonely region defiled by human crime and cursed by God. Indeed, as time went on, common usage established a right, and the mountain was looked upon as Ranf's lawful home, upon which none had a right to intrude without just cause. Ranf's restless presence added a new horror to the spot, and numerous were the stories which grew out of his goings to and fro, not only in the day but in the night, for it appeared as if this deformed being could live without sleep. In all these stories, and in all that surrounded Ranf's life and movements, imagination played its part to the dwarf's disadvantage, and even those of the islanders most charitably inclined were loth to admit that the circumstance of a man surrounding himself with that kind of animal life, which was typical of faithfulness and gentleness, spoke in his favour. Ranf had pronounced judgment upon himself. His open violation of religious observance, and his systematic defiance of the laws of social life, caused him to be regarded as an outlaw.

He did not murmur. One person loved him, a child it was true, but more likely on that account to be sincere in the expression of her feelings. With that love he was content. He neither asked nor expected to be received as a guest by the Sylvesters, but Margaret knew that he kept close watch over Evangeline, and she received more than one proof that the feeling the dwarf entertained for the child was as deep as it was sincere. Evangeline had been with them a year when she was taken ill, and for nearly a month was not allowed to leave the house. Margaret, nursing the child, heard Ranf's signal, a faithful imitation of the song of the lark. She went out immediately, but the dwarf did not present himself. In the rear of the house was a stretch of woodland, thickly clustered with trees, and it was here that Ranf and Evangeline were in the habit of meeting. Ranf from his hiding-place could see who it was that answered his signal, and when Evangeline appeared he continued his clear notes, walking slowly into the closer shelter of the trees, Evangeline following him, until they reached a spot where they could converse in private. Upon this occasion, seeing Margaret approach, he was silent, and kept himself from her sight. She waited, however, and presently imitated

Ranf's call. Judging from this that she had news for him, and having reason to trust her, he replied to her, and guided her to the spot on which he stood.

"I heard your signal," she said, "and came at once."

"It is not you I want," he said.

"Where is Evangeline?"

"She is ill."

He turned white at the news, and exhibited so much emotion that Margaret felt a great compassion for this lonely man who had but a single human being in the world to love or to speak a kind word for him. She explained that Evangeline was suffering from one of the common ailments of children, and that with care she would almost certainly recover.

"May a blight," cried Ranf, "fall upon the land if anything evil happens to my little flower! May plague destroy it, and fire burn it!"

"Hush!" said Margaret, sternly; "better to pray to God for our little one's recovery. If you would have your own opinions respected, pay respect to those of others. Your language is not fit for a woman's ears; how much less, then, for the ears of a child!"

"You are entirely right, mistress," muttered Ranf; "I ask your pardon. I would not harm her to save my soul."

"You may come in and see the child if you like; she knows no one; in her delirium she has often mentioned your name."

"Thank you," he said humbly; "I will come in and see her."

"You will not speak to her; she must be kept perfectly quiet."

Ranf followed Margaret into the house, with steps lighter than her own. Evangeline lay in a large cool room, covered with bedclothes of snowy whiteness; her eyes were closed, her little hands were agitated by feverish movement. In the distant window facing the child were a few loose flowers; the window was partly open, and the sweet air flowed in.

"She likes to see the flowers," whispered Margaret; "yesterday, when she opened her eyes and looked towards the window, she smiled at them."

Ranf nodded, and stood looking down upon the child; something in her pale face or in the quietude of the room, touched him nearly, for his eyes were filled with tears.

"May I take her hand?" he asked in a whisper.

"Be very gentle," answered Margaret.

Ranf knelt by the bedside, and softly

placed his rough hand on Evangeline's pretty fingers. The action did not disturb her, nor did she move when he pressed his thick coarse lips to the tender palm. For some time he knelt in silence, and when he rose to leave the room, he beckoned to Margaret. She accompanied him into the air.

"There is no danger, you think," he said.

"She will recover, by the mercy of God."

He did not quarrel with the formula, but gave Margaret a grateful look.

"I am your friend, for ever," he said; "remember that. But for you, Evangeline might have died."

"She is like one of my own," said Margaret, "and has brought to me the sweetest and most painful remembrances."

"It is a life of suffering," was Ranf's commentary. "Those who love least suffer least. Mistress, until Evangeline is well, I must have some place near here to sleep in."

"You will not come into the house?"

"No. I slept in that shed one night, with your permission. May I do so again?"

"You are welcome. We do not use the shed."

"Place nothing in it, bed, nor food, nor anything you suppose would add to my comfort. I shall feel more at my ease if I am allowed to come and go of my own free will, and I prefer to look after myself."

"You shall have your way."

"I shall come only in the night, and it is not likely you will see me. I would ask another favour at your hands."

"Give it words."

"If all has gone well with Evangeline during the day, place outside her window a flower, so that I may see it when I come in the night."

"It shall be done."

She had an intuitive knowledge of the best way to treat this strange creature, and her words were few and to the point. Thinking of him after this interview, she began to pity him in her heart, and to wonder what kind of life had been his to render men and the ways of men so hateful in his eyes. In that one house in all the Silver Isle some feeling of compassion was felt for the lonely man.

Regularly every evening Margaret placed a flower outside the window of Evangeline's bedroom. Evangeline's recovery was slow but sure, and when she was strong enough to leave her bed, the child—having

been told by Margaret why and for whom a flower was placed on the window-sill in the evening—placed another by its side, saying:

"Ranf will know it comes from me."

Margaret informed her husband and Matthew that she had given Ranf the use of the shed, and the children were warned not to enter it by day or night.

"He may have it altogether if he likes," said the men; "there is no occasion to say anything about it. He will get to learn in time that we look upon it as his."

This happened without any words passing between them; and when one morning Margaret Sylvester found two lovely white goats, each with a kid, tethered to a post near the entrance to her house, she knew that they came from Ranf as a mark of friendship and gratitude.

To Joseph and Gabrielle Ranf was a being of wonderful and mysterious importance. In as far as he was removed from ordinary creatures, so far was he above them. That Evangeline loved him was sufficient to elevate him in their eyes. Ugly and ungainly as he was, he was in some sense a hero, whose hand it would be an honour to touch. Up to a certain time they were only friends with him vicariously, Evangeline being the intermediary. It was years before he spoke to them, and when he came upon them suddenly in the forest, Gabrielle, trembling, scarcely dared to raise her eyes above his knees. Joseph, though inwardly shaken, was bolder, and returned Ranf's searching look with one of modest curiosity. He answered with outward confidence the questions put to him by Ranf, and the dwarf appeared to be pleased with him. This was Joseph's impression, and was confirmed by Evangeline in a conversation out of which sprang an adventure which established a friendship between Joseph and Ranf.

"Ranf likes you," said Evangeline to Joseph.

"Did he say so?" asked Joseph.

"No; but I can tell. He likes you because I do."

This would have been humiliating to one who aspired to be illustrious in himself; but Joseph was content to receive lustre through Evangeline.

"Did he ask that?" enquired Joseph.

"What?"

"Whether you liked me?"

"Yes."

"And you do like me?"

"Yes."

"Better than anybody?"

Evangeline considered before she answered. "Except Ranf."

"What would you do for me?" asked Joseph anxiously.

"Anything," she replied vaguely.

"What would you give me?"

"Everything."

Joseph's mind at present was more definite.

"Ask me questions," he said. It was a favourite request of his when he had anything he wished particularly to say or do.

"Questions about you and me."

"Do you like me, Joseph?"

"More."

"Do you love me?"

"Yes."

"Better than anybody?"

"Yes; better than anybody."

"Better than Gabrielle?"

"That is different?"

"Why is it different?"

"I don't know, but it is."

"You have not told me, though," persisted Evangeline.

"I love you better than Gabrielle."

"Does she know that?"

"Yes, and she says it is right."

"Why is it right?"

"I don't know, but it is."

"May I tell Ranf?"

"Yes, I would like him to know; I would like everybody to know."

"Do you love me better than you love your mother?"

It was an unkind question, and Joseph's lips trembled as he answered:

"Yes, but that is different, too."

"Does your mother know that?"

"No, and I should not like to tell her."

"Then it can't be right."

"It must be right, because it is you. It would not be if it were anybody else. I would like you to understand, Evangeline."

"Make me understand, Joseph."

Joseph looked around for an inspiration. It came it him in the form of a broken branch which lay upon the ground. A light flashed into his eyes; he stooped and picked up the branch.

"This is a good thick stick," he said; "look at it, Evangeline; it is full of knots."

"I see."

"If my mother said to me, 'Joseph, put your left hand on that stone, and strike it hard with the branch, as hard as you can,' I should ask her why she wished me to hurt myself; I am not sure whether I should not throw the branch

away, and tell her if she wanted to hurt me she must do it herself."

Joseph's left hand lay upon the stone; in his right he grasped the branch.

"Well, Joseph," said Evangeline, "I don't understand yet."

"You will presently. That is what I should do if mother desired me to strike myself. But if you were to say to me, 'Joseph, strike as hard as you can, and show me how much you love me,' you would see what I would do."

The children looked straight at each other for a moment. Then Evangeline, suddenly closing her eyes, cried:

"Joseph, strike as hard as you can, and show me how much you love me."

She heard the sound of a blow, and she opened her eyes in fear. Joseph's bleeding hand lay upon the stone, and Joseph was gazing at her with a proud smile on his face.

"Oh, Joseph, Joseph!" cried Evangeline. "What have you done?"

"Tried to show how much I love you," replied Joseph, with no tremor in his voice, although his hand was sorely wounded. "I would do more than that. Do you understand now?"

"Yes, I understand. Oh, Joseph, Joseph, how could you do such a thing? How could you hurt me so? I feel it more than you do! It is cruel, cruel!"

She took the wounded hand in hers, and her tears fell upon it. In her remorse she raised it to her lips and kissed it. An exquisite thrill of happiness stirred the boy's heart.

"Will you kiss me, Evangeline?"

She kissed him passionately, and left the trace of blood upon his lips. Then she drew him to a spring of water, and bathed the wound, and wrapped her handkerchief round it. Joseph laughed gaily.

"It does not hurt, Evangeline," he said. "You must not cry. If it was your little hand instead of mine, it would be different."

"Joseph," whispered Evangeline, "I will never, never be cruel again."

"You must not say that," said Joseph with an air of gravity; "because, as Grandfather Matthew says, we never know what is coming."

"There's blood on your lips, Joseph; let me wipe it off."

He held her hand to prevent her.

"There's blood on your lips, too, Evangeline. Do not wipe it away. Let it remain; then we shall not forget."

"I shall never forget, Joseph."

"Nor shall I."

"Does your hand pain you now?"

"No; it was never so well. What are you wrapping the branch in your frock for?"

"I am going to keep it, Joseph, all my life."

"You must promise me one thing, Evangeline."

"What is it?"

"You must promise me beforehand."

"I promise."

"Mother, nor any of my people," the phrase came to Joseph, and he gave utterance to it in a lofty tone, "must know of this."

"They ought to be told, Joseph."

"They shall not be told, Evangeline. I have your promise."

She felt that it was out of consideration for her that the promise was extracted. Of her own will she would have related voluntarily the story of Joseph's heroism and her own wilfulness, and would have gloried in showing herself in the worst and Joseph in the brightest light. However, it was not to be; the secret was between her and Joseph, and another, from whom she concealed nothing.

"Ranf must know, Joseph."

"As you please about that. He will not talk of it to anybody else."

That night Joseph, with boyish enthusiasm, looked at his lips stained with the blood of Evangeline's kiss. He would have liked to retain that mark for ever. It could not be; but deeper and more lasting than any outward sign was to be the remembrance of the secret bond which bound him to Evangeline for ever and ever. As he nursed his wounded hand in his sleep he dreamt of greater deeds performed for her sake, of greater suffering endured in her behalf. It was a proud epoch in his young life, and his state of exultation was purified and freed from selfish dross by an innate nobility of nature which one day in the future might blossom into heroic fire.



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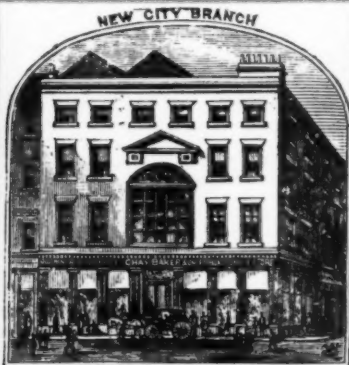
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